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CARMEN I. PARIS, MPH
Interim Health Commissioner

August 28, 2006

Patricia A. Maryland, Chair
Citizens' Health Care Working Group
7201 Wisconsin Avenue, Room 575
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Dear Ms. Maryland:

Greetings from Philadelphia! The revisions to the Citizens' Health Care Working Group (CHCWG) recommendations published on July 18, 2006, represent a marked advance from the June 1, 2006, version, and are responsive to the many suggestions for improving the earlier draft from around the country. With the new timetable, instead of waiting to act on the basic values and principles outlined in the original version, these recommendations can become an active force right now. This approach provides a solid foundation for moving ahead toward the goal of Congressional action for a reformed national health system by 2012.

We strongly favor the approach CHCWG has taken to immediately start to protect everyone from high health care costs. We recognize that if we are to end the threat of impoverishment to those individuals who lack adequate income to pay health insurance premiums, we must look to entitlements or mandates to supplement marketplace insurance. This type of comprehensive coverage will provide a solid financial base for your other recommendation, to build integrated community health networks to provide basic care and health promotion services for people where and when they need it.

We understand the fundamental importance of the involvement of health care providers in integrated public/private community networks. In addition, we believe that your final recommendations should stress the importance of including state and local government, business and labor, faith related groups, payer organizations, as well as representatives of the public, including those segments of the community that have suffered from lack of decent health care in those community networks.

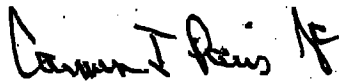
As discussed during Philadelphia's April 10, 2006, community meeting, we are moving to set up the Health Leadership Partnership (HLP), based on a voters' mandate to develop a plan for

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decent health care for all in Philadelphia. The HLP will be our local public/private collaborative network of all elements of the local health system, committed to decent health care for all and to supporting the CHCWG recommendations. We respectfully suggest that you build this concept into the final CHCWG recommendations.

We are available for exploration of this idea. In the meantime, please continue to count on our full cooperation and support of this exciting initiative to guarantee a health care system that is inclusive of all. Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the CHCWG interim recommendations.

Sincerely,



Carmen I. Paris, MPH
Interim Health Commissioner

CIP/jp